

We claim:

1. An encapsulated comestible material comprising:
at least one comestible particulate material; and
5 a coating composition applied to and encapsulating said at least one particulate material,
said coating material comprising a plant-derived protein source.

2. The encapsulated material of claim 1, wherein said protein source is
selected from the group consisting of vital wheat gluten, wheat protein isolate, wheat protein
10 derivatives, zein protein, soy protein, and mixtures thereof.

3. The encapsulated material of claim 1, wherein said at least one particulate
material is selected from the group consisting of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, drugs, food
additives, nutraceuticals, microorganisms, enzymes, peptides, proteins, carbohydrates,
15 antimicrobial products, vaccines, and mixtures thereof.

4. The encapsulated material of claim 1, wherein said coating composition
comprises from about 1-50% by weight of said protein source.

20 5. The encapsulated material of claim 1, wherein said coating composition
comprises less than 1% by weight animal protein.

6. A method of forming an encapsulated material comprising the steps of:
providing a film-forming solution comprising a plant-derived protein source;
25 coating at least one particulate comestible material with said film-forming solution; and
drying said film-forming solution on said at least one particulate comestible material
thereby forming said encapsulated material.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said protein source is selected from the
30 group consisting of vital wheat gluten, wheat protein isolate, wheat protein derivatives, zein
protein, soy protein, and mixtures thereof

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8. The method of claim 6, wherein said at least one comestible material is selected from the group consisting of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, drugs, food additives, nutraceuticals, microorganisms, enzymes, peptides, proteins, carbohydrates, antimicrobial products, vaccines, and mixtures thereof.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein said film-forming solution comprises from about 1-50% by weight of said protein source.

10. The method of claim 6 wherein said film-forming solution comprises less than 1% by weight animal protein.

11. The method of claim 6, wherein said film-forming solution comprises a solute selected from the group consisting of water, ethanol, acetic acid, hydrochloric acid, and mixtures thereof.

12. The method of claim 6, wherein said coating step comprises blending said particulate comestible material and said film-forming solution to form a homogeneous mixture.

13. The method of claim 6, wherein said drying step comprises vacuum drying, spray-drying, freeze-drying, oven-drying, or a combination thereof.

14. A method of feeding an animal or a human comprising:
feeding said animal or human a particulate material encapsulated with a film-forming composition comprising a plant-derived protein source.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein said plant derived protein source is selected from the group consisting of vital wheat gluten, wheat protein isolate, wheat protein derivatives, zein protein, soy protein, and mixtures thereof.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein said particulate material is selected from the group consisting of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, drugs, food additives, nutraceuticals, microorganisms, enzymes, peptides, proteins, carbohydrates, antimicrobial products, vaccines, and mixtures thereof.

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17. The method of claim 14, wherein said film-forming composition comprises less than 1% by weight animal protein.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein said animal is a ruminant animal.

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